

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00

INRE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 COME-00

EB-07 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 TRSE-00 AID-05 PC-01

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FM AMEMBASSY ACCRA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8891

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEBASSY LOME

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

US MISSION USUN NEW YORK 674

C O N F I D E N T I A L ACCRA 5042

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT PINS PGOV GH

SUBJECT: ACHEAMPONG ANNOUNCES REFERENDUM ON UNION GOVT

1. IN 0600 HRS BROADCAST TO NATION TODAY GHANAIAAN HEAD OF STATE GEN I.K. ACHEAMPONG ANNOUNCED AD HOC COMMITTEE ON UNION GOVT WILL SUBMIT ITS REPORT TO THE PUBLIC IN THREE MONTHS AND THAT A NATIONAL REFERENDUM OF THE FUTURE GOVT WILL BE HELD IN SIX MONTHS. HE REFERRED TO FUTURE GOVT AS "UNION" 94 "NATIONAL" GOVT, WHATEVER THE PEOPLE WANT. ACHEAMPONG ALSO ASSURED THE PUBLIC THAT HE WAS NOT ATTEMPTING TO PERPETUATE MILITARY RULE AND IF THE ARMY OR POLICE ARE TO BE IN A FUTURE GOVT IT WOULD BE THE PEOPLE'S CHOICE. HE ADDED THAT IF REFERENDUM FAVORS THE FORMATION OF A CONSTITUENT

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ASSEMBLY THIS WILL BE DONE. ELECTIONS COULD THEN FOLLOW. THE GOVT'S CONCERN IS ONLY THAT THE TRANSFER OF POWER BE PEACEFUL AND ORDERLY. ACHEAMPONG ALSO DEVOTED A SECTION OF HIS SPEECH TO STANDARD ATTACKS ON NATION-WRECKERS AND DESTABILIZARS -- REFERENCE TO STRIKING PROFESSIONALS, APPRAENTLY.

2. 1 JULY PAPERS (PUBLISHED DESPITE THE FACT 1 JULY

IS HOLIDAY -- REPUBLIC DAY-- ANNOUNCED NEW MINIMUM WAGE
OF FOUR CEDIS DAILY, A WHOPPING ALMOST FIFTY PERCENT INCREASE
OVER PREVIOUS MINIMUM WAGE OF TWO CEDIS SEVENTY PESEWAS
WHICH HAS BEEN IN EFFECT SINCE LAST YEAR.

3. NO SURPRISINGLY NEWSPAPERS SIMULTANEOUSLY RAN
ARTICLES QUOTING GHANA TRADES UNION CONGRESS'S (TUC)
APPEAL TO PROFESSIONAL BODIES (DOCTORS, LAWYERS, ENGINEERS,
ETC) NOT TO STRIKE AS THREATENED. STRIKE WOULD
IMPOSE HUMAN SUFFERING TUC SAID. STRIKE WAS TO GO INTO
EFFECT TODAY AND REMAIN IN FORCE UNTIL GOVT STEPS DOWN.
TUC ALSO APPEALED TO GOVT TO SHOW MAGNANIMITY TOWARDS
PROFESSIONALS AND OPEN A DIALOGUE WITH THEM.

4. COMMENT: MINIMUM WAGE HIKE WAS MOST LIKELY A QUID PRO QUO
FOR TUC'S SUPPORT AT A TIME WHEN ALMOST EVERYONE IS EXPRESSING
AT LEAST DISTASTE FOR THE MILITARY GOVT. BUT WITH INFLATION
ALREADY MORE THAN EIGHTY PERCENT THE RAISE IS BOUND TO INCREASE
DESTABILIZATION IN THE LONE RUN. ANNOUNCEMENT OF PLANNED
REFERENDUM IS ALSO PROBABLY A DIRECT REACTION TO THE
WIDESPREAD DISAFFECTION WITH THE REGIME SINCE PREVIOUS INDICATONS
HAVE BEEN THAT "UNION GOVT" WOULD INVOLVE ONLY COSMETIC CHANGES.
IT IS TOO SOON TO MEASURE PUBLIC REACTION TO THE ABOVE, BUT
IT APPEARS TO US THAT ACHEAMPONG MAY WELL HAVE SUCCEEDED IN
BUYING HIMSELF SOME MORE TIME.

SMITH

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Disposition Approved on Date:
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